Sony VAIO VGN-TX650P/B 11.1 Laptop (Intel Pentium M Processor 753, 512 MB RAM, 60 GB Hard Drive, DVD+R Dbl Layer/DVD+/-RW Drive)

A Really Good Subnotebook

Take a load off your shoulders when youre racing for your plane with the sleekly designed and ultra-portable Sony Vaio VGN-TX650P/B notebook PC, which weighs just an amazing 2.76 pounds. It also features integrated wireless Wide Area Network (WAN) technology to keep you connected and productive when away from your workstation and a dual-layer, multi-format DVD/CD burner with Click to DVD software, enabling you to create high-quality, customized DVDs for presentations or home movies. It also has an 11.1-inch widescreen LCD with XBRITE technology, 1.2 GHz ultra-low voltage Pentium M processor, 60 GB hard drive, 512 MB of installed RAM (1.5 GB maximum), a battery life of between 4 and 7.5 hours, Bluetooth wireless capability (for connecting to peripherals such as PDAs, cell phones, and printers), a multi-format memory card reader, and a wide assortment of pre-loaded software titles. The Basics

Hard Drive: The 60 GB hard drive (4200 RPM) is becoming the average size for notebook PCs, providing enough capacity for storing documents, digital media files, and productivity software.

Processor: The Intel Pentium M Processor Ultra Low Voltage 753 (1.20 GHz, 2MB L2 cache, 400 MHz FSB) delivers outstanding mobile performance and low-power enhancements for sleeker, lighter notebook designs. The 1.2 GHz clock speed can be misleading--for most tasks, this processor will be faster than a 1.6 GHz Pentium 4-M. It sits at the top of the spectrum for this processor class (as of October 2005).

Memory: The VGN-TX650P/B has two memory slots and comes loaded with 512 MB of DDR SDRAM (PC3200, 400 MHz DDR RAM; 1 x 512 MB), and it can be expanded to a maximum of 1.5 GB.

CD/DVD Drive: Offering the latest in DVD writing technology, the multi-format DVD/CD drive is compatible with both DVD+ and DVD- disc formats as well as dual-layer DVD+R discs, which can store up to 8.5 GB of data. For both standard, single-layer DVD-RW and DVD+RW discs, it has a 8x write/4x rewrite speed, while double-layer DVD+R discs have a 2.4x write speed. For CDs, it has a 24x write/10x rewrite speed. It also has a separate DVD-ROM drive with 8x DVD read speed and 24x CD read speed. Keyboard & Mouse: This notebook has an 82-key keyboard with 1.7mm stroke and 17mm pitch and an electrostatic touchpad. Screen, Graphics and Sound

The 11.1-inch XBRITE LCD has a resolution of 1368 x 768 pixels--perfect for watching movies in their intended 16:9 widescreen aspect ratio. Sonys Smart Display Sensor feature instantly adjusts resolution when you connect to a display or projector. Video is powered by the Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 900, which uses Intel Dynamic Video Memory Technology (DVMT) and provides up to 128 MB of shared video memory. The integrated audio card provides 16-bit stereo sound via the built-in stereo speakers. Connectivity and Expansion Slots

The VGN-TX650P/B features Sonys SmartWi technology, which seamlessly integrates wireless Wide Area Network (WAN), 802.11b/g wireless LAN and Bluetooth technologies, enabling you to toggle among your wireless connectivity options depending on your surroundings. With the Bluetooth connectivity, you can communicate and synchronize with Bluetooth-enabled peripherals such as PDAs and cell phones. You get a good offering of connectivity options, including both USB 2.0 and iLink (Firewire): 2 USB 2.0 ports for connecting a wide range of peripherals--from digital cameras to MP3 players 1 FireWire (also known as IEEE 1394 or i.Link) port for connecting digital video camcorders and other peripherals 1 VGA monitor port 1 PCMCIA (or PC Card) slot (Type I/II, 32-bit) 1 headphone jack 1 microphone jack Port replicator connector Memory card slot, compatible with Memory Stick and Memory Stick DUO media with MagicGate functionality and Secure Digital Media (SD) It also has an integrated 56K modem (V.90) and an RJ-45 LAN network port (for a 10/100 Ethernet connection to networks and DSL/cable modems). The optional Port Replicator unit also includes 3 additional USB 2.0, VGA, RJ-45, and parallel ports. Preloaded System and Software

This system comes with the Windows XP Professional Edition (which adds Microsofts IIS Web server, back-up and recovery utilities, Remote Desktop, and other enhanced business features) with Service Pack 2 featuring Advanced Security Technologies, which helps to reduce unwanted downloads and pop-ups while surfing the Web. It also comes loaded with a bevy of Sony multimedia software: Click to DVD (DVD creation), SonicStage (digital music), SonicStage Mastering Studio (with MP3 encoder), Vaio Media (network file sharing), DVgate Plus (digital video), and Image Converter (for PSP transfer). Other preloaded software includes Quicken 2005 New User Edition, Microsoft Works 8.0 (with word

processing, spreadsheet, and calendar), Norton Internet Security (with 90-day subscription), Intervideo WinDVD, Roxio DigitalMedia SE, Adobe Photoshop Album starter edition, and SpySubtract (with 30-day subscription). Dimensions and Weight

Amazingly small and light, the VGN-TX650P/B weighs 2.76 pounds with standard battery and measures 10.7 x 1.12 x 7.7 inches (WxHxD). Power

Its powered by the VGP-BPS5 lithium-ion rechargeable battery, which produces a battery life of between 4 and 7.5 hours. Whats in the Box

This package contains the VGN-TX650P/B notebook PC, rechargeable lithium-ion battery, AC adapter, Cingular Wireless SIM card, and operating instructions. It is backed by a one-year limited hardware warranty, and Sony offers 1-year of toll-free telephone technical assistance.

My Personal Review:
I bought my Sony VAIO TX650 from my local CompUSA back on January 3 2006 when on that day they had just received their latest shipment. It was on sale at the time for [...] but it came with a [...]. I was considering other laptops including the business version of an HP laptop but what sold me on this was the fact that it had some really cool extra features like WiFi, WWAN by Cingular, Bluetooth, and a DVD/CD player that does not need a boot into Windows. Plus not to mention the fact that this was one of the very first Sony VAIOs that Ive seen that could actually take an SD card (which is what I really needed since I happen to own a Nikon D50 camera and could use a place to archive my photos).

First off, the computer is very light. At the time I purchased this laptop, my other laptop (an HP Pavilion ZX5240US) was in repair. But it wasnt until March that I got my HP back and when I picked it up then I realized just how I forgot just how heavy an average laptop like that really weights! *rotfl*

The screen is quite bright and readeable. The keys are a bit too small and they can take some time getting use to. Sometimes the computer can slow down a bit but then again I am a very patient person by nature. The only complaint that I really have with my Sony is the fact that I cannot seem to find out how to correctly configure Microsoft IIS 5.0 on it (since it does come standard on Windows XP Pro installations); if you plan on installing/using Microsoft Visual Studio .NET 2003 for web development, you may need to find a separate testbed. But for me, Ive recently uninstalled 2003 and installed Visual Studio 2005 which comes with its own web server testbed (and eliminates the need of using IIS 5.0).

There were some softwares that came preinstalled with the system that I did not need. However, they were easily removed since such extras would have slowed down the computer anyways.

At the time of sale, I was warned by the salesperson that Sony VAIO batteries in general tend to degrade sharply after 12 months. So at his recommendation, I purchased a 3-year comprehensive repair plan. It did add almost [...] to the purchase price (and as a result I paid [...] or so altogether) but he told me that over the course of these three years I may need to replace the battery at least twice at [...] a piece so I would be getting my moneys worth in the long run. I havent had to ask for repair yet, though. Nor have I experienced any of the other negative things that others have mentioned about in their reviews (i.e. noisy fans after a year, dead batteries, screen cracks, pixel drops, etc.)

Get this laptop if you really dont like the idea of having to lug around a behemoth of a regular laptop. It can be held in one hand. If not for the price, at least get it for the looks as it seems to be a real chick magnet for me (hey, Ive already gotten twelve different phone numbers from some really alluring ladies, even though I am an average looking nerd! 8-)).

One more thing: at [...] a month unlimited, Cingular Connect is a bit too expensive for me. I personally have T-Mobile. Even though it requires the use of a PCMCIA card to access and it runs on GPRS (which is much slower than Cingulars EDGE), all I pay is [...] a month. I get unlimited GPRS data access, unlimited T-Mobile HotSpot WiFi access, international data roaming, 20c a minute a-la-carte voice calls, and 200 in/out messages a month. Which is fine for me since I use GPRS for downloading my emails only. But if you can afford Cingular, then by all means go for it!

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